

BURUNDI FREE PRIMARY EDUCATION POLICY AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

Jacqueline Murekasenge
Hope Africa University, Bujumbura
Burundi

Burundi Nation

- ❖ Small landlocked country in the East Africa
- ❖ Burundi population; Burundi
- ❖ was governed by the Umwami (king) , and Bashingantahe
- ❖ Colonized by Germans, and Belgians (Ruanda-Urundi



Burundi Nation

- ❖ “Formal” education was introduced in 1920s)/ traditional education
- ❖ Independence since 1962
- ❖ Post colonial period was marked by cyclic conflicts and violence, wars since 1960s- 2000s
- ❖ Challenged by persistent poverty, overpopulation and unemployment



The FPE Policy general background information

- ❖ The FPD policy has been implemented since 2005
 - Special presidential declaration
 - Under the framework of MDGs and EFA
 - The global consensus on the role of education in economic growth and development
 - A powerful strategy of the post conflicts contexts
 - A powerful strategy of the post conflicts contexts
 - Pillar for the Burundi national development and poverty Reduction process



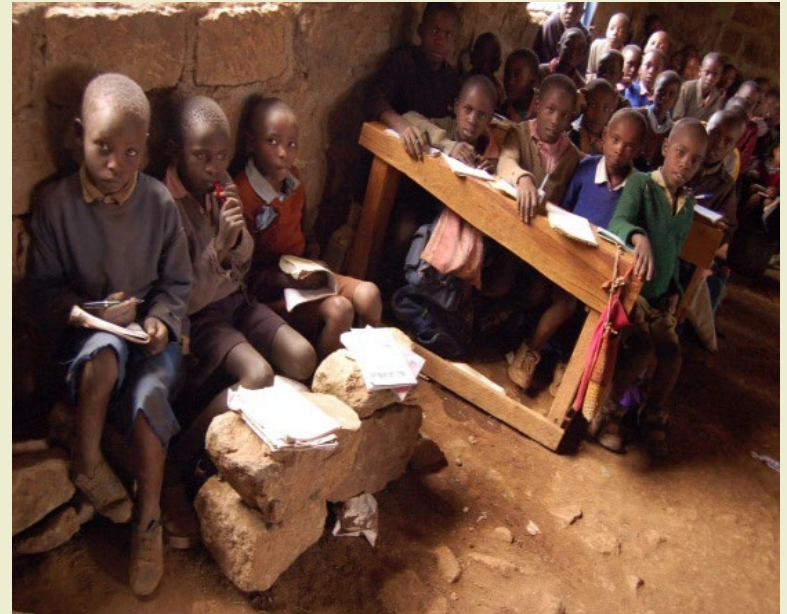
Primary Education Context in 2000s

❖ Before the policy

- Very low enrollment rates
- Very low primary education completion rates
- High rates of retention and dropout
- Few infrastructures (long distance home-school)
- Few education staff
- Remarkable education disparities
(region, ethnic (social groups))
- Insecurity and internal displacement

Primary Education Context in the 2000s

- ❖ After the policy declaration in 2005
 - Impressive increase of enrollment
 - Propagation of education rhetoric
 - Increase of education advocacy



Primary Education context in the 2000s

- ❖ Remarkable involvement of all education actors at all levels
 - Leaders and population
 - Private companies and churches
 - International Donors



Main challenges of the Policy

- ❖ Still a number of young are out of school system
- ❖ Increasing drop out and retention rates
- ❖ Remarkable low rates of primary education completion

But Why?

- Poverty!?
- Research interest
- What are local community expectations, experiences and aspirations
- Interviews, focus group discussions, observations in rural areas (Gitega & Cibitoke)



Local community people's expectations of the FPE policy

- ❖ Access to education by all (excitement, enthusiasm and optimism)
- Acquiring knowledge and skills
- (social mobility) Respect and honor,
- Ability to help their families and communities
- Turning adversity, as much as resilient they can be



Local Community experiences

- ❖ Ambiguities concerning the “free” education, under the FPE policy
- ❖ Shortage of material and human resources
- ❖ The new reforms implemented alongside the policy
- ❖ Serious deterioration of the quality of education (“Formantahe”)

Impacts

- ❖ Teaching and learning process
- ❖ Local community people's trust (towards policy makers,
- ❖ Young people's aspirations
- ❖ Already existing disparities and inequalities

What matters for the population in a given context must be a priority for policy makers.

Murakoze!